$$Mw(\alpha) / Mw(a) \leq 1.2 \qquad (III)$$

$$Mw(\beta) / Mw(b) \leq 1.2 \qquad (IV)$$

wherein Mw(α): weight average molecular weight of polymer (α),

Mw(β): weight average molecular weight of polymer (β),

Mw(a): weight average molecular weight of block (a) of block copolymer,

and

Mw(b): weight average molecular weight of block (b) of block copolymer.

REMARKS

Claims 8-17 are pending. Claims 8-13 have been allowed. Claim 14 is amended. Support for the amendment can be found throughout the application, for instance in the specification and claims as originally filed. No new matter is added. Claims 14-17 are submitted for further consideration at this time.

Applicants note that in the previous Office Action dated January 30, 2003, claims 14-17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by or, in the alternative, under 35 USC §103(a) as obvious over Kawazura et al.

Applicants respectfully submit that such rejection was incorrect. The present invention as set forth in claim 14 is concerned with a rubber composition consisting essentially of (I) 100 parts by weight of a block copolymer having at least two mutually incompatible blocks (a) and (b) and composed of at least one conjugated diene monomer and, optionally, at least one aromatic vinyl monomer and (II) 5 to 200 parts by weight of (i) a polymer (α) compatible with the block (a), (ii) a polymer (β) compatible